

HB 2790 with HCA 1 -- VISITING SCHOLARS CERTIFICATE

SPONSOR: Swan

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 9 to 0.

This bill will allow the State Board of Education to grant an initial visiting scholar certificate as a license to teach in public schools. The applicant must be employed in a content area in which the individual has an academic degree or professional experience. He or she may only teach classes for ninth grade or higher. The certificate will last for one year and the applicant can renew it a maximum of two times if certain requirements, as described within the bill, are met.

HCA # 1: This amendment more narrowly defines the requirement that must be verified by the hiring school district.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say being able to attract professionals to a classroom who have a lifetime of experience in a field has been a problem if they are not also a teacher. In rural schools it can be very hard to find people that are able to share their knowledge with students about the world of work because those people do not have a traditional teaching certificate.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Swan; Cooperating School Districts Of Greater Kansas City; Missouri Council Of School Administrators; Missouri Education Reform Council; and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that we want to make sure any changes to our teacher certification laws are a net positive thing and good for our students. Needs to be narrowly tailored.

Testifying on the bill was the Missouri National Education Association.